



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Glazed silk, newly cut, smooth, glittering, white,  
As white, as clear, even as frost and snow.  
Perfectly fashioned into a fan,  
Round, round, like the brilliant moon,  
Treasured in my Lord's sleeve, taken out, put in—  
Wave it, shake it, and a little wind flies from it.  
How often I fear the autumn season's coming,  
And the fierce, cold wind that scatters the blazing heat.  
Discarded, passed by, laid in a box alone;  
Such a little time, and the thing of love cast off.

Perhaps by comparing the three the western reader may arrive at some idea of what the Chinese poem is like, as a surveyor, by taking three slants at a mountain, can measure it. And if he adds thereto a knowledge of the complex form in which it is written, he may even get a fairly correct idea. It is a laborious process, but can one who does not read Chinese find a better?

*Eunice Tietjens*

REVIEWS

HIS HOME TOWN

*Slabs of the Sun-burnt West*, by Carl Sandburg. Harcourt, Brace & Co.

The books of this man are piling up. *Chicago Poems*, *Cornhuskers*, *Smoke and Steel*, and now these *Slabs*—all these since that day in 1914 when, unknown to fame, he stormed POETRY's doors and picked up the first Levinson Prize, thereby exciting a loud hee-haw of protest from the arbiters of taste; indeed, all these since 1916,

when the first book was published. Eight years, and the arbiters of taste have come round, so that two of these books have been beprized without arousing their derision. Eight years, and this radical of 1914 is becoming *vieux jeu* to the young radicals of 1922, who would elbow him out of the muses' presence even as he unwittingly elbowed out Neihardt and George Sterling and Madison Cawein.

What of this fourth book?—does it keep up the pace? Well, any book which contains *The Windy City* and *Washington Monument by Night* can not be said to show a flagging of poetic energy. The former is more compact, more definitely planned and shaped, than either *Prairie* or *Smoke and Steel*, and it carries its big subject throughout with an assured and easy power. It is perhaps too early to say whether it contains passages of such imaginative intensity as a few in these other two long poems—for example, the finale of *Prairie*, with the line, "The past is a bucket of ashes"; but it does achieve a certain splendor; it is a magnificent interpretation of a great modern town, with all her imperfections on her head, and all her glories too.

Let us examine this modern ode, the poet's latest word about Chicago, as "Hog-butcher of the world" was his earliest. The early poem had the forthright directness of a powerful etching done in a few bold lines. The second swings a big brushful of color, puts in background and foreground, light and shadow, shapes up a balanced

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

composition on a large canvas. We see “the lean hands  
of wagon men . . . shaping the junk of the earth to a new  
city,” we see how “the junk stood up into skyscrapers.”  
We hear the red men naming

The place of the skunk,  
The river of the wild-onion smell,  
Shee-caw-go.

And later the poet commands:

Lash yourself to the bastion of a bridge  
And listen while the black cataracts of people go by, baggage, bundles,  
balloons—listen while they jazz the classics.

And this is what we hear:

“Since when did you kiss yourself in?  
And who do you think you are?  
Come across, kick in, loosen up.  
Where do you get that chatter?”

“Beat up the short-change artists—  
They never did nothin’ for you.  
How do you get that way?—  
Tell me and I’ll tell the world.  
I’ll say so, I’ll say it is.”

“You’re trying to crab my act.  
You poor fish, you mackerel,  
You ain’t got the sense God  
Gave an oyster—it’s raining—  
What you want is an umbrella.”

. . . . .

“Hush baby,  
It ain’t how old you are,  
It’s how old you look,

*His Home Town*

It ain't what you got,  
It's what you can get away with."

. . . . .

"Tell 'em, honey.  
Ain't it the truth, sweetheart?  
Watch your step.  
You said it.  
You said a mouthful.  
We're all a lot of damn fourflushers."

. . . . .

The American temperament is there—American good-humor joshing itself in a slouching march-movement of slang.

We feel a big poet-spirit going along with the founding of the city and the lifting up of "the living lighted skyscrapers," going along with all the man-size jobs that changed a few huts on a marsh into a great modern town; and there is a large broom-sweeping irony for the comfortable people who profit by these labors in their smoothly ordered lives, and for the superior people who criticize the results:

It is easy to listen to the haberdasher customers hand each other their easy chatter—it is easy to die alive, to register a living thumb-print and be dead from the neck up.

. . . . .

It is easy to come here a stranger and show the whole works, write a book, fix it all up—it is easy to come and go away a muddle-headed pig, a bum and a bag of wind.

And then the spirit of the city rises and shakes off these little encumbrances with a grin:

Chicago fished from its depths a text: "Independent as a hog on ice."

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

That grotesque old saying was as familiar as *Yankee Doodle* in my childhood, for my father found it a beloved simile. Applied to Chicago, it is a true "text," in spite of the seeming sensitiveness of local pride. And like other grotesques flirting for an instant their rags of scarlet, it trails the purple shadow of tragedy:

Forgive us if the monotonous houses go mile on mile  
Along monotonous streets out to the prairies;  
If the faces of the houses mumble hard words  
At the streets, and the street voices only say:  
"Dust and a bitter wind shall come."  
Forgive us if . . .

There are many *ifs*, especially:

Forgive us if we work so hard,  
And the muscles bunch clumsy on us,  
And we never know why we work so hard—  
If the big houses with little families  
And the little houses with big families  
Sneer at each other's bars of misunderstanding;  
Pity us when we shackle and kill each other,  
And believe at first we understand,  
And later say we wonder why.

And out of it all—beauty; beauty beaten out of the  
innumerable desperate dreamful shifts of change:

The library building named after Crerar, naked as a stock-farm silo,  
light as a single eagle-feather, stripped like an airplane propeller,  
takes a path up.

Two cool new rivets say, "Maybe it is morning"—"God knows."

Put the city up; tear the city down; put it up again; let us find a city.  
Let us remember the little violet-eyed man who gave all, praying, "Dig  
and dream, dream and hammer, till your city comes."

*His Home Town*

Every day the people sleep and the city dies; every day the people shake  
loose, awake and build the city again.

. . . . .

"I will die as many times as you make me over again," says the city to  
the people.

So the poet goes on to "mention proud things"—there  
is a high pride throughout the poem, as well as the hog-  
on-ice independence of the man who cares not whether  
all the world decries and defames. Proud things such as:

The jack-knife bridge opening; the ore boats,  
the wheat barges passing through.  
Three overland trains arriving the same hour . . .  
. . . a carload of shorthorns . . .

And the final section of the poem is an invocation to  
the winds, the city's fierce-breathing blessing and bane:

Winds of the Windy City,  
Winds of corn and sea blue,  
Spring wind white and fighting winter gray,  
Come home here—they nickname a city for you.

The winds of Chicago are in the poem—it has a big  
sweeping generous movement. It goes—and it goes  
forward.

*Washington Monument by Night* is one of its author's  
finest lyrics—and that is saying a great deal. *At the  
Gates of Tombs* has something of the big sad grotesque  
humor we remember in *Losers*; and we linger a minute  
with *Primer Lesson* and the closing lines of *Harsk, harsk*.  
But the rest of the book seems loosely put together.  
The unknown soldier poem, *And So Today*, says nothing

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

new or in a new manner; surely there was a subject here, but this serves up what we all read in the newspapers. As for the title-poem, in the second section it succeeds at first in suggesting something of the exalted but flabbergasting bewilderment—as of a man knocked cold by sublimity—which overwhelms many a tourist at his first view of the Grand Canyon of Arizona. The interview with God, and the summing-up of man's absurd incompetence, are not bad—through their rough-and-tumble humor one feels the deeper inexpressible emotion. But the mood thins out, lifting again for only the final lyric, which is fine.

Perhaps Mr. Sandburg hasn't stayed long enough as yet in the sun-burnt Far West. He doesn't feel it as deeply as he does his own Windy City. H. M.

MURIEL STUART

*The Cockpit of Idols*, by Muriel Stuart. Methuen & Co., Ltd., London.

Courage and passion blow out the structure of these poems. The initial idea is slight, as in the heartrending tale of war, *It's Rose-time Here*; and sometimes fantastic, as in *The Centaur's Love*; but always it is handled with sureness, with a high fearlessness, and passion is always there sweeping each poem along, farther and farther away from the commonplace. There is never any sentimentality; even with such a subject as *The Bastard* Miss Stuart manages to keep gloriously free of this customary fem-